A FAMILY OF SPOTTED NEGROES

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It is the purpose of this note to put on record an interesting variation in human skin color which made its appearance as a mutation or sport in a negro family of the southern United States some sixty years ago and has shown itself fully hereditary through two generations of offspring. The nature of the variation is shown in Figs. 1–4. It consists of a "piebald" condition of the skin, which is spotted with white in a fairly definite pattern, not[2] unlike that of certain domesticated animals. A more-or-less continuous white area begins on the top of the head, which has a crest of white hair, extends down over the face (where, however, it may be interrupted) and broadens out on the chest, which is either entirely white or finely mottled. In the whitest individuals the chest area extends around the sides of the body on to the back (see Fig. 4), but fails to reach the mid-dorsal line. It also extends on to the arms in like proportion to its extension elsewhere on the body, but the lower forearm and hands, like the feet, are in all observed cases dark. The ventral white area continues downward from the waist line, and in at least one case (Fig. 4) covers the legs, which are nearly free from black spots down to the knees. There larger and more numerous specks of black begin, which become continuous above the ankles.

If we should describe the pattern in terms of its black

[1] The material on which this paper is based was collected by the senior author; the junior author has merely assisted in preparing the material for publication.

[2] A photograph in our possession of the same four individuals shown in Fig. 1 together with the father of the three children, taken when the children were small, but now too faded for successful reproduction, makes it clear that the pigmented areas have not changed in position during the intervening period. As in other piebald mammals the pigmented areas have definite boundaries fixed at birth and not subsequently changeable.

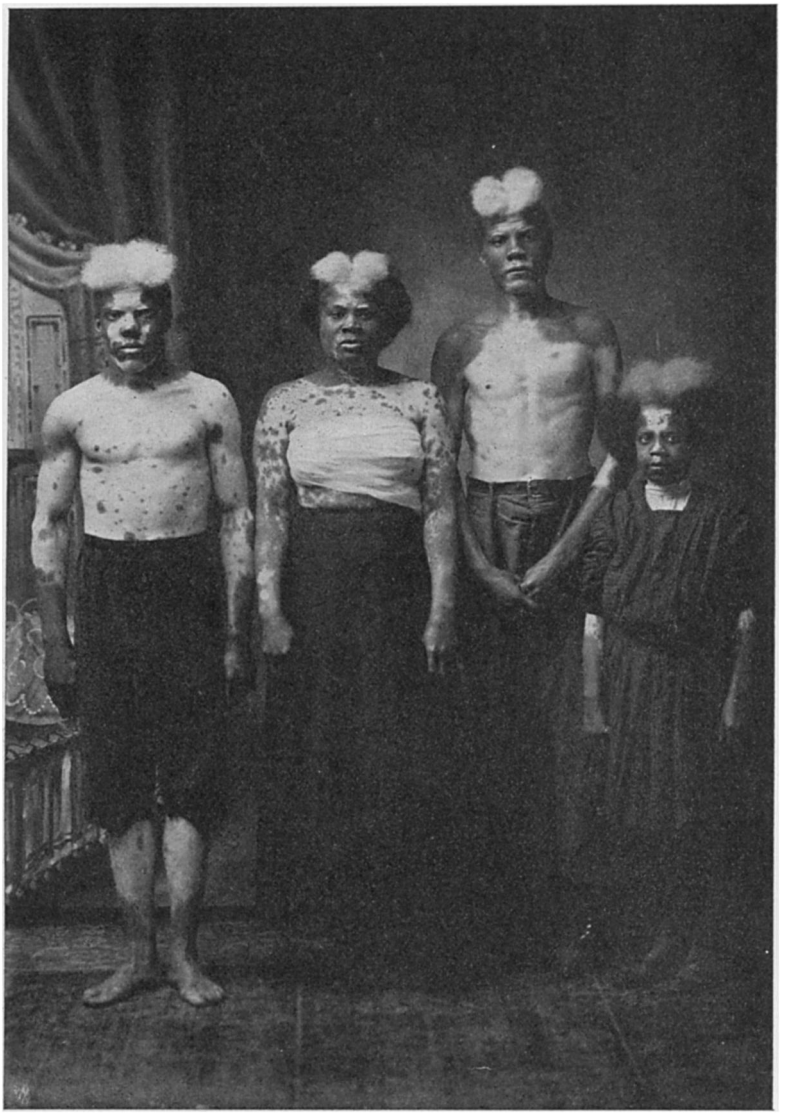

FIG. 1. Mrs. Eliza D., her sons Jim and Robert (the taller one) and daughter, Lillie. Photographed 1910.

areas, we should mention as its most prominent feature the *back-stripe* (Fig. 4) which begins on the head and extends the entire length of the trunk, narrowing below and ending on the buttocks. In the taller son, Robert,

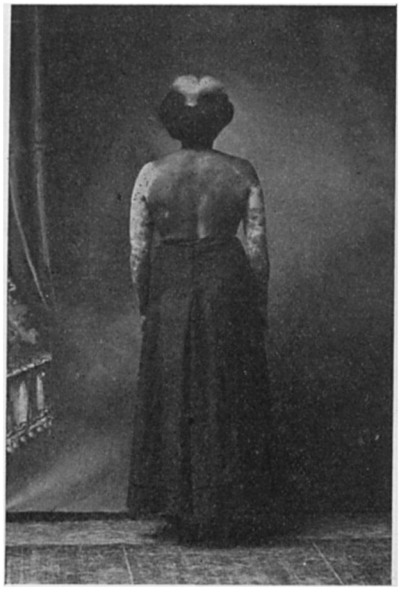

FIG. 2. Back view of Mrs. Eliza D., seen in front view in Fig. 1.

and states positively that there were no spotted negroes previously in that region. The colored skin of Mrs. S. A. is "medium dark" as is that of her husband, who is entirely normal in appearance, being free from spots.

The pair were married in 1868 and have had fifteen children, all of whom are living, a fact which indicates a healthy vigorous stock. Of the children eight are spotted like the mother, the remaining seven being normal, without spots, but varying in Fig. 1, the back-stripe is so wide that it covers the sides of the body also.

The original mutant, founder of this line of spotted negroes, Mrs. S. A., is still living. She was born in 1853 in Louisiana, both her parents being normally colored negroes, the father "dark," according to the statement of her husband who grew up in the same neighborhood

FIG. 3. Lillie, daughter of Mrs. Eliza D. Compare Fig 1.

depth of pigmentation, as is usual in mulatto families. The pigmentation of spotted children and grandchildren

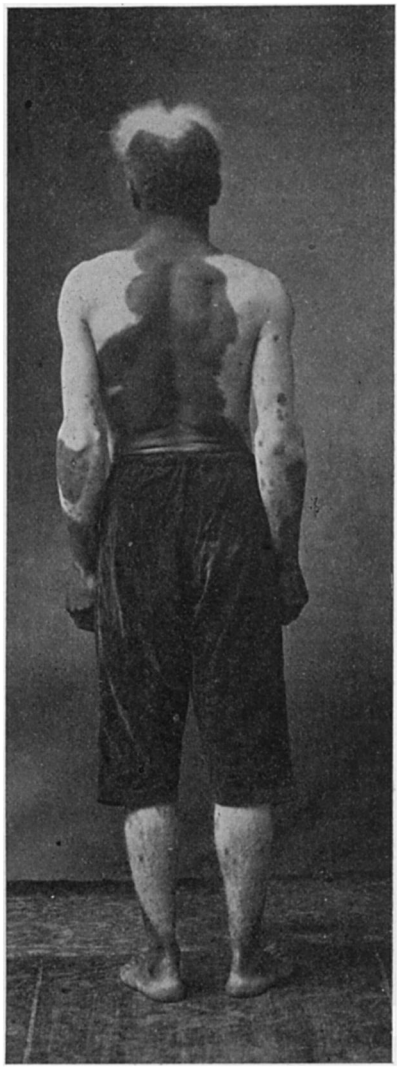

FIG. 4. Back view of Jim, seen in front view, at the left of Fig. 1.

likewise varies in intensity from light mulatto to coal black. The white spots are however in all cases entirely devoid of pigment.

Six of the fifteen children of Mr. and Mrs. S. A., three normal and three spotted, married normal negro mates and have had from two to four children each. The normals have had only normal children, in all seven. The spotted ones have had nine spotted and two normal children.

The normal children of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. who married consisted of two daughters and one son; the spotted ones consisted of two sons and one daughter. There is evidently no sex-limitation in the transmission of the spotted pattern, which behaves consistently as a simple Mendelian dominant character, the only peculiarity of the case being the excess of spotted grandchildren over the expected one half. But this quite probably is a chance deviation due to the small numbers under consideration, or to failure to secure as complete a report of the unspotted as of the spotted grandchildren.

The descendants of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. are now widely scattered through the United States and Europe, certain of the spotted ones being connected with "museums." Their peculiarity is therefore an economic asset and not likely to interfere with their racial increase. The individuals thus far produced are clearly from their parentage all heterozygous for the spotted character, which they transmit in half only of their germ-cells. If in the course of time two spotted individuals of this race, not closely related, should marry each other, we might on Mendelian principles expect the production of a new type of individual, one homozygous in spotting, which would transmit the character in *all* its germ-cells. What the *somatic* character of such an individual would be we can at present only conjecture. Our experience with the domesticated animals leads us to think that it certainly would not be an albino with pink eyes and unpigmented or faintly pigmented skin, since true albinism is genetically entirely distinct from spotting with white and is recessive in heredity whereas this character is dominant. More likely it would resemble "black-eyed whites" such

as occur among mice, rabbits, guinea-pigs, cats, dogs, cattle and horses. Our experience with these animals would lead us to expect that the homozygote in this strain of spotted negroes would be either wholly white, that is, with snow-white skin and hair but with colored eyes, or spotted but with pigmented areas still further reduced in extent than in the heterozygote. Some student of genetics generations hence may be able to answer the question. To this end we shall deposit with the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, N. Y., our original data including the correct names and present whereabouts of these people.

Three of the spotted children of this family, of whom we have been unable to secure pictures, are undoubtedly identical with "The Three Striped Graces" figured (Plate VV) and described (p. 248) by Pearson, Nettleship and Usher in "A Monograph of Albinism in Man," London, 1911, after Hutchinson, *British Medical Journal*, June, 1910, p. 1480. The names given by Pearson, *et al.*, for the three individuals are "Mary, Rose and Fanny," which agree sufficiently well with individuals VII, VIII and X, of our table. Our own information obtained from members of the family indicates that *at present* VII is in America, while VIII, X and XIV together with the grandchild, Beatrice, are in Europe.

TABLE

DESCENDANTS OF MR. AND MRS. S. A., THE FORMER A NORMAL, THE LATTER A SPOTTED NEGRO

Children	*Grandchildren*
I. Mrs. Eliza D., spotted, Figs. 1 and 2; Mate, mulatto.	1. Spotted son (dead); 2. Spotted, Jim (pigment dark), Figs. 1 and 4; 3. Spotted, Robert (pigment light), taller son, Fig. 1; 4. Spotted, Lillie (pigment medium dark), Figs. 1, right, and 3.
II. Mrs. Eugenia —, normal; Mate, colored.	Two normal.

III.	Mr. Horace A., spotted;	1. Normal, light brown;
	First mate, light mulatto;	2. Spotted, brown;
		3. Spotted, brown;
	Second mate, black.	1. Spotted, black.
IV.	Mr. Jake A., normal;	Three normal.
	Mate, colored.	
V.	Mr. John A., spotted;	1. Spotted, Beatrice;
	Mate, dark.	2. Normal;
		3. Spotted.
VI.	Mrs. Jane —, normal;	Two normal.
	Mate, colored.	
VII.	Marie, spotted.	
VIII.	Rosa, spotted.	
IX.	Dolphus, normal.	
X.	Fannie, spotted.	
XI.	Maggie, normal.	
XII.	Bennie, spotted.	
XIII.	Louis, normal.	
XIV.	Sadie, spotted.	
XV.	Hattie, normal.	